

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5691
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
RUFHRSVAMEMBASSY ALGIERS 92
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSD TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 MANAMA 0212
EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: BA
SUBJECT: AMIR AND FOREIGN MINISTER ON HALT IN PEACE TALKS

REF: SECTO 01074

1. SUMMARY. AMIR AND FOREIGN MINISTER REACTED TO BRIEFING
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SUPPLIED REFTEL BY URGING THAT U.S. TAKE ACTION QUICKLY TO
SUPPORT SADAT. AMIR SAID LACK OF U.S. ACTION IS "BRINGING
SADAT DOWN". FOREIGN MINISTER SAID KEY TO FUTURE U.S. CREDI-
BILITY IN PEACE TALKS ROLE IS FIRM U.S. ACTION, NOT JUST
WORDS, AGAINST ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORY.
AMIR SEEMED ALMOST BITTERLY RESIGNED TO FACT THAT, AS HE

SAW IT, HIS PREVIOUS OPTIMISM ABOUT SADAT'S INITIATIVE AND HIS EXPECTATION THAT U.S. WOULD SUPPORT IT WERE WRONG. FOREIGN MINISTER BELIEVES THAT SADAT INITIATIVE IS ALL BUT DEAD, "SADAT IS RETREATING ALREADY", AND THAT ONLY BOLD U.S. MOVE ON SETTLEMENTS QUESTION CAN SAVE THE DAY. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING SEPARATE CALLS JAN 24 ON AMIR AND FOREIGN MINISTER I BRIEFED THEM ON STATE OF PLAY IN PEACE TALKS ON BASIS REFTEL. I STRESSED TO BOTH THAT THOUGH SITUATION OBVIOUSLY DELICATE, AMIR IS NOT CLOSED TO FURTHER MOVEMENT AND THAT USG IS COMMITTED TO DOING WHAT IT CAN TO RESTORE AMOMENTUM. ALSO EMPHASIZED POINT THAT WE ARE IN PHASE WHEN QUIET DIPLOMACY IS TO BE PREFERRED TO FURTHER DIPLOMACY VIA THE MEDIA. BOTH AMIR AND FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR BRIEFING BUT BOTH RESPONDED THAT SITUATION IS ALMOST IRREPARABLE AND TO EXTENT THAT SADAT INITIATIVE CAN BE SAVED, IT IS UP TO USG TO DO IT. BOTH MEN NOTED THAT EVEN AMONG ARABS WHO OPPOSED SADAT, AND WERE ANGRY, THERE IS GROWING TREND TOWARD FEELING SORRY FOR HIM.

3. AMIR'S FIRST REACTION TO REFTEL BRIEFING ON STATUS AND PROSPECTS FOR GOIFE TALKS WAS TO STATE THAT "U.S. IS BRINGING SADAT DOWN". IN WHAT WERE FOR HIM UNUSUALLY STRONG AND BITTER TERMS AMIR SAID THAT HE HAD SUPPORTED SADAT'S BRAVE MOVE AND HAD EXPECTED THAT SINCE SADAT'S OFFER TO ISRAEL WAS ALL THAT U.S., AND WORLD, HAD EVER ASKED OF ARABS, THAT U.S. SECRET

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WOULD GIVE HIM EVERY SUPPORT. BUT U.S. HAS NOT DONE SO; UNITED STATES HAS SAID ONLY THAT IT SUPPORTS SADAT'S MOVE TO DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS AND HAS REFUSED TO SAY THAT SADAT OR ISRAEL IS RIGHT OR WRONG ON THE ISSUES. WITHOUT U.S. SAYING FRANKLY WHAT IT BELIEVES PRINCIPLES OF PEACE MUST BE, ISRAELIS WILL

CONTINUE TO REFUSE TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY. AMIR SAID THAT IF U.S. BELIEVES SADAT IS RIGHT AND ISRAEL WRONG THEN IT HAD BETTER SAY SO SOON IF CHANCE FOR PEACE IS NOT TO BE LOST.

"IF U.S. BELIEVES ISRAEL IS RIGHT THEN IT SHOULD SAY SO AND LET SADAT GO INTO HISTORY."

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AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
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4. FOREIGN MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO BRIEFING WAS TO POINT OUT AGAIN (SEE MANAMA 0157) THAT IN HIS VIEW KEY QUESTION NOW IS THAT OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. HE REPEATED HIS BELIEF THAT IT WAS THIS ISSUE WHICH WAS PRIMARY MOTIVE BEHIND SADAT'S WITHDRAWAL FROM JERUSALEM TALKS. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT CREDIBILITY OF U.S. ROLE IS COMING
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INCREASINGLY TO DEPEND ON ITS REACTION TO ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. EVERYONE KNOWS U.S. POSITION IS THAT THESE SETTLEMENTS ARE ILLEGAL. IF U.S. FAILS TO TAKE ACTION TO MAKE ITS POSITION STICK WITH ISRAELIS THEN ARABS WILL KNOW THAT U.S. IS HELPLESS, ITS FOREIGN POLICY COMPLETELY PARALYZED BY DOMESTIC PRESSURES. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE RECALLS U.S. REPS AT U.N. TAKING FIRM STAND AGAINST EXPENDITURE OF U.S. PORTION OF U.N. FUNDS ON INFORMATION

CAMPAIGN ABOUT PALESTINIAN QUESTION. FOLLOWING THIS LOGIC, WHY SHOULD NOT U.S. PUBLICLY DEDUCT FROM ITS AID TO ISRAEL THE COST OF BUILDING, MAINTAINING AND DEFENDING ILLEGAL SETTLEMENTS? HE CONTINUED THAT EVERY TIME U.S. HAS SAID SETTLEMENTS ARE ILLEGAL, ISRAEL HAS SET UP A NEW ONE AND U.S. HAS SIMPLY KEPT SILENT.

5. IMPACT OF THIS WAS BAD ENOUGH QEPAST BUT NOW THAT SETTLEMENTS HAVE BECOME CENTRAL ISSUE IT IS SERVING TO FOCUS ATTENTION IN MOST DEPRESSING FASHION ON U.S. INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT ITS OWN POSITIONS IN FIRM WAY. WHAT CAN ARABS CONCLUDE EXCEPT THAT, EVEN WHEN SADAT HAS OFFERED THE FULL PEACE WHICH U.S. HAS ALWAYS SAID WILL BE NEEDED, U.S. CANNOT OR WILL NOT GET ISRAELIS TO BE AT ALL REASONABLE. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID PRESIDENT'S RECENT STATEMENT THAT U.S. HAS ONLY LIMITED INFLUENCE WITH ISRAEL IS NOT BELIEVED IN ARAB WORLD AND WILL NOT PROTECT U.S. FROM ARAB BELIEF THAT U.S. HAS FAILED SADAT. HE SAID REPORTS OF A NEW SETTLEMENT IN PAST FEW TUJS AND STATEMENT BY A GOI MINISTER THAT GOLAN HEIGHTS ARE AND WILL REMAIN ISRAELI GIVE FURTHER EVIDENCE OF ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE, EVIDENCE WHICH FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE EXPECTS WILL GO UNCHALLENGED BY U.S.

6. FOREIGN MINISTER WENT ON TO OUTLINE HIS VIEW THAT SADAT SEEMS TO HAVE ONLY TWO CHOICES: REPUDIATE HIS OWN INITIATIVE
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AND SEEK SOLACE WITHIN UNITED AND HARDLINE ARAB FRONT OR, IN DESPERATION, SIGN SEPARATE DEAL WITH ISRAEL. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE IS NOT CERTAIN IF SADAT COULD SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH TO EXERCISE FIRST OPTION. HE OPINED THAT SECOND OPTION, "A PEACE OF SURRENDER", IS A REAL POSSIBILITY AND ONE WHICH JORDAN, TOO, MIGHT ACCEPT IN TIME. BUT SUCH A PEACE WILL ONLY DELAY INEVITABLE DIQASTER IN AREA. HE SAID HE IS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT ABILITY OF SAUDIS TO CONTINUE THEIR PRESENT COURSE IF SADAT FAILS. SAUDIS HAVE CHOSEN THE AMERICAN CONNECTION AND HAVE PURSUED IT WITH GREAT PERSERVERANCE AND PATIENCE, DESPITE SNIPING FROM MANY ARABS AND OCCASIONAL ATTACKS FROM U.S. CONGRESS AND MEDIA. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE HAS NO DOUBTS ABOUT SAUDIS' DESIRE TO CONTINUE THEIR PRESENT POLICIES BUT IN PRACTICAL POLITICAL TERMS THEIR ABILITY TO DO SO WOULD BE GREATLY REDUCED, SOONER OR LATER, BY SADAT'S -- AND USG'S -- FAILURE TO ACHIEVE PEACE.

7. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE APPRECIATED USG EFFORTS AND HOPED I WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WAS NO FEELING OF SATISFACTION IN HIS EXPRESSION OF DISAPPOINTMENT OVER USG'S FAILURE TO GIVE EFFECTIVE SUPPORT TO SADAT. ERVERTING TO ONE OF HIS FAVORITE THEMES, FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT OVER THE DECADES

USG HAD USED ACTIONS,
NOT JUST WORDS, TO MAKE POINT TO ARABS
THAT FORCE COULD NOT SOLVE THEIR DISPUTE WITH ISRAEL. ARABS
HAD FI ALLY GOTTEN THE MESSAGE AND SADAT HAD ACTED ON IT IN
VERY DRAMATIC WAY. NOW, USG MUST ALSO USE ACTION, NOT JUST
WORDS, TO GET MESSAGE TO ISRAELIS THAT US WILL GUARANTEE
THEM IN PEACE BUT WILL NOT SUPPORT THEIR CONTINUING OCCUPATION
OF ARAB LANDS.

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PAGE 01 MANAMA 00212 03 OF 03 260733Z
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8. COMMENT: POLITICAL ANXIETY LEVEL CLEARLY RISING IN
THESE PARTS,
MUST BE CASE THROUGHOUT ARAB WORLD. SADAT
INCREASINGLY SEEN AS A MAN DESERVING OF PITY, A MAN WHO

TRIED TO DO NOBLE DEEDS IN THE FACE OF TREMENDOUS ODDS BUT ONE
WHO, INEVITABLY, HAS FAILED. AMERICAN MOTIVES STILL SEEN AS
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WORTHY ONES BUT OUR ACTIONS ARE VIEWED AS WOEFULLY INADEQUATE.
OUR STATEMENTS THAT PEACE MUST BE REACHED BY PARTIES THEMSELVES
ARE SEEN EITHER AS NAIVE OR AS WEAKNESS, OR BOTH. STATEMENTS
BY ISRAELI LEADERS REACHING HERE REVEAL TO BAHRAINIS
RAPIDITY WITH WHICH ISRAELIS HAVE ADOPTED AS GIVEN THAT WHAT
ISRAEL IS TO GET IS THE FULL PEACE WHICH SADAT OFFERED AND
THAT WHAT ARABS ARE TO GET IS AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE. "WHAT
HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY" AND "WHAT IS MINE IS MINE AND
WHAT IS YOURS IS NEGOTIABLE" ARE OF COURSE CLASSIC NEGOTIATING
TACTICES BUT NOT ONES WHICH MODERATE ARABS ACCEPT AS
APPROPRIATE ISRAELI RESPONSE TO SADAT'S INITIATIVE. RIGHTLY
SO OR NOT, FROM HERE BALL IS CLEARLY SEEN TO BE IN U.S.
COURT. THERE IS STILL SOME HOPE HERE THAT USG WILL SUPPORT
SADAT BY DEMONSTRATING THAT U.S. CAN MOVE ISRAEL ON ONE OR
ANOTHER OF ISSUES NOW AT STAKE. DIFFICULT TO JUDGE ITS
PRACTICALITY FROM HERE, BUT U.S. STATEMENT -- WITH SOME
TEETH -- ON SETTLEMENTS ISSUE WOULD HELP REVERSE SADAT'S
DOWNWARD SLIDE IN EYES OF HIS SUPPORTERS HERE.
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